



THE INNOKO

A long river with a population at historic low. C1.

SENATE URGED

Residents don't want large cuts to education funds. Below.

SOCCKER GOALS

JDHS sophomore Taylor Bentley is Player of the Week. B1.



Has Juneau's crime wave peaked?

• Police say number of crimes decreased in Juneau in 2018

• Department closer to being fully staffed

By ALEX MCCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

With the full-year numbers in, it's official: the number of crimes in Juneau decreased from 2017 to 2018. Juneau Police Chief Ed Mercer and Deputy Chief David Campbell presented the figures at the Juneau Chamber of Commerce luncheon Thursday. The number of Part 1 crimes, which are essentially felony crimes, decreased by about 8.7 percent from 2017 to 2018. There were decreases in nearly every category (including theft, robbery, burglary and rape), though the number of vehicle thefts increased by 37.9 percent, according to the Juneau Police Department's statistics.



Juneau Police Chief Ed Mercer speaks to the Juneau Chamber of Commerce during its weekly luncheon on Thursday.

MICHAEL PENN
JUNEAU EMPIRE

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House rejects large cuts

Dunleavy's budget now goes to Senate for approval

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Alaska House on Thursday passed a state operating budget rejecting the level of cuts proposed by Gov. Mike Dunleavy, sending it to the Senate for further work. Cuts were made to areas like the university system, ferry system and Medicaid though lawmakers were told the state has flexibility to make some additional Medicaid cuts. Minority House Republicans unsuccessfully sought continued debate on proposed amendments, including some they said dealt with Alaska Permanent Fund dividends.

SEE CUTS | Page A4

Juneauites urge Senate to preserve education funding

After House approval, Senate set to begin budget process

By ALEX MCCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

As the Alaska House of Representatives approved its operating budget on Thursday, members of the Senate were listening to Alaskans from around the state share their thoughts on what they wanted the Senate to do with the budget. For an hour and a half, the Senate Finance Committee listened specifically to Juneau residents. Testifiers included everyone from University of Alaska Southeast students to retirees to Mayor Beth Weldon. Education-related topics stood out, as attendees implored the senators

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MEET THE RESCUERS



VIDEO
See an interview with the rescuers at juneauempire.com.

MICHAEL PENN | JUNEAU EMPIRE

Zach Rhoades, left, and Starr Parmley talk about rescuing a stranded dog on the side of Mount Juneau on Thursday. They worked with three other climbers on Wednesday to rescue the dog.

Together locals help visitor, save dog

Climbers volunteered blindly for daring rescue

By ALEX MCCARTHY
JUNEAU EMPIRE

As she reluctantly hiked down Mount Juneau at dusk Tuesday, Catalina Quiroga could hear Nootka barking and crying. Nootka, a 3-year-old husky-St. Bernard mix, had gotten stranded on a cliff on the mountain after chasing after a trio of mountain goats. Quiroga, 29, was visiting Juneau from Haines Junction, Yukon, for a few days and didn't know anyone in town. Capital City Fire/Rescue personnel responded to try and help her get Nootka down, but they weren't able to. Alaska State Troopers chose not to deploy Juneau Mountain Rescue, as the Troopers don't devote resources to pet rescues. Nootka would have to spend the night on the mountain. As nightfall fell and Quiroga strode down the mountain, she feared the worst. "I thought by the morning she was going to be dead, and I kept thinking, 'I don't know anybody here who's going to help me,'" Quiroga said. The seeds of a rescue had already been sown, though Quiroga didn't know it yet. She had spoken to another woman who was hiking the mountain that afternoon, and told her about the situation. The next morning, that woman happened to be

SEE DOG | Page A4

Longtime Care-A-Van operator may lose bid to taxis

Paratransit service's potential new direction draws letter of protest

By BEN HOHENSTATT
JUNEAU EMPIRE

Care-A-Van's operator might change, but the service will remain. The transit service for elderly people and people with disabilities could soon have a new operator pending a City and Borough of Juneau decision to award a contract for paratransit services to Juneau Taxi instead of long-time operator Southeast Senior Services, a division of Catholic Community Service. A change of operators was recommended after proposals to provide the service from Juneau Taxi and Catholic Community Service were evaluated by an evaluation committee consisting of transit staff, according to a memo from the CBJ Purchasing Division. "We were baffled how Juneau Taxi scored higher," Erin Walker-Tolles, Executive Director for Catholic Community Service, told the Empire in a phone interview Thursday.



Care-A-Van, Juneau's paratransit service, is being rebranded as Capital AKcess, and some vehicles are already sporting the new name. The service may also have a new operator.

COURTESY PHOTO | CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

SEE TAXIS | Page A4

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DOG:

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...talking with co-workers, including Alicia McArthur, who called her boyfriend Zach Rhoades to see if he could help out. Rhoades, an active climber, immediately agreed to help and headed to the mountain. At the same time Wednesday morning, the bar manager at the Alaskan Bar (to whom Quiroga had spoken about the situation) who goes by Angie Rae reached out to Starr Parmley, another climber in town. Parmley,

like Rhoades, immediately agreed to assist. Each of them grabbed climbing partners and headed to the mountain. By the time they all gathered by the cliff a little after noon on Wednesday, the rescue party included Rhoades, Parmley, Quiroga, Rae, Tighe Daugherty and Louis Toock. Many of the people who showed up knew each other, and Parmley said they were immediately able to develop a plan. “The small town, especially the climbing scene and backcountry scene, made it really easy to feel comfortable getting into something a little more complicated,” Parmley said. As soon as she saw the

equipment and the confidence that the climbers had, Quiroga started feeling better. She said she was shocked to see so many people show up to dive into a somewhat perilous situation to help a total stranger. “It’s hard when you’re in a different country and you don’t know anyone,” Quiroga said. “We had only been here for like a day before this. It definitely felt unexpected, but it was the best surprise to see how much people reached out and tried to help me.” After the climbers developed a plan, Parmley started rappelling down the face of the cliff. Like everyone else, he was worried about what he’d find. He said he didn’t

know if the dog was even going to be alive until he heard the barking. Then Nootka came into sight. She was wagging her tail and walking around the small cliff she was on, Parmley recalled. Parmley said Nootka’s bright blue eyes stood out to him. Rhoades was close behind. Together, the two of them figured out how to rig a harness for a dog. Using a rope system to move items, Rhoades said, is a pretty standard skill to have for a climber. But using ropes to move a 70-pound dog was a new challenge. The two of them laughed as they recalled the learning process. “Rigging up a harness to a dog was not something

either of us had done before,” Rhoades said, “so we kind of figured it out as we went.” They rigged Nootka tightly and began to slowly raise her up about 50 meters. Rhoades went up alongside Nootka, trying to keep her safe in the harness and trying to keep her from accidentally hitting her face on the rocks as she was lifted up. The whole process took around four hours. More than 24 hours after Nootka had taken off running after mountain goats, she and Quiroga were united. As soon as she got some food and water, Nootka was back to her usual energetic and bouncy self. Quiroga said she knows

other dog owners will be upset that Nootka wasn’t on a leash. She said Nootka was on a leash for most of their walk that day, and that Quiroga took the leash off when they were on the Mount Juneau Trail and were away from other dogs. Quiroga, 29, grew up in Chile but moved to Canada five years ago. She called Nootka her “Canada family,” saying that she and Nootka do everything together. As she spoke Wednesday night at the Alaskan Hotel while Nootka slept upstairs, Quiroga paused and smiled as she spoke about how it felt to have her best friend back.

• Contact reporter Alex McCarthy at amccarthy@juneauempire.com. Follow him on Twitter at @akmccarthy.

TAXIS:

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Four unnamed evaluators almost universally favored Juneau Taxi to Catholic Community Service. Three evaluators rated Juneau Taxi higher, and one evaluator rated Catholic Community Service two points higher —scores fluctuated between 687 to 832 points.

A maximum score would be 1,000 points, according to a proposal evaluation form included in the city’s request for proposals. Walker-Tolles said the social services agency is protesting the results, and has sent a letter of protest to the city. A letter of protest is the first step in an appeal process with the city, said Mike Vigue, director for the city’s Public Works & Engineering Department. Vigue said generally contracts are awarded to

the highest-scoring proposal received in response to a request for proposal, but there is not yet a deal in place. “We haven’t awarded the contract yet,” Vigue said. “We’re in that process.” The program serves those who cannot ride Capital Transit buses. Paratransit is a service required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Generally, in order to be compliant,

public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service must also provide a complementary paratransit service to people with disabilities who can’t use bus or rail service. The paratransit service must provide pick-ups and drop-offs within 3/4 of a mile of a bus route or rail station at the same hours of day at no more than twice the regular fixed-route fare. “It’s a requirement because we have a fixed route,” Vigue said. “It’s not going away.”

New name The program is also heading toward a new name. It’s already being re-branded as Capital AKcess by the city — some vehicles are already sporting the new name. Regardless of who is ultimately awarded the contract, Vigue said the actual vans used in the Capital AKcess program are the city’s property and not provided by the operators. That means cabs would not be replacing the vehicles used to transport

the elderly or people with disabilities. He said the city has a group of new vans for the program because the old ones had reached the end of their useful life, and they are waiting to be deployed pending settling on an operator. “They provide the service,” Vigue said. “We provide the equipment.”

• Contact reporter Ben Hohenstatt at (907)523-2243 or bhohenstatt@juneauempire.com. Follow him on Twitter at @BenHohenstatt.

CRIME:

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Still, the number of crimes in 2018 was 68 percent more than the number of crimes in 2014 (1,820 Part 1 crimes in 2018 compared to 1,081 in 2014). Juneau has seen drastic leaps in crime since 2014, according to JPD numbers. “We hope we’ve hit the peak and are headed in the right direction,” Campbell said.

The drop in crime for 2018 is not surprising, as Mercer and Campbell have presented numbers since June 2018 that suggested the number of Part 1 crimes was on the decline in Juneau. Part of this change might be attributable to better staffing. The department had 13 officer vacancies in April 2018. As of Thursday, the department had just six officer vacancies. Previously, Mercer has attributed crime decrease to officers getting to know their neighborhoods and who to look for on their beat. The way those statistics

are kept is about to change dramatically, though. Former JPD captain Jerry Nankervis, who was in attendance, asked about the department’s upcoming switch from the current Summary Reporting System (SRS) to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). That switch is expected to happen in 2021. Under the SRS system, if someone commits multiple crimes in one incident, the system records it as only the most severe crime. The NIBRS system logs all crimes committed in an incident. This provides more accu-

rate statistics, and also records more crimes. Though the decrease in crime is a positive, the chiefs spent much of Thursday’s presentation talking about the challenges they face and the overall rise in crime the past few years. Four main factors attributed to the crime wave of recent years, they said: the opioid addiction, criminal justice reform legislation, repeat offenders and an understaffed District Attorney’s Office. The criminal justice reform legislation in question, Senate Bill 91, was passed into law in 2016 and aimed

at reducing the number of incarcerated people in Alaska. Detractors of the law say it’s allowed repeat offenders to get back on the street easier. Campbell said the rise in crime can’t solely be attributed to SB 91. “It is true that the crime spike started before the criminal reform,” Campbell said, “but the drug epidemic was taking place before that as well.” Tackling the drug problem remains a high priority for the department, Mercer and Campbell said. In reference to the staffing at the Juneau District Attor-

ney’s Office, Mercer pointed out that there are fewer prosecutors than there are judges at Juneau’s Dimond Courthouse. He made that point about half an hour after the Chamber luncheon too, as he spoke to the Senate Finance Committee and requested that they put funding for another Juneau prosecutor in their budget. “This has forced prosecutors to dismiss viable cases due to the lack of resources,” Mercer said. “Whenever a case is dismissed in this fashion, a criminal goes unpunished and a crime victim fails to receive justice.”

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU YOUR MUNICIPALITY

MEETING & EVENTS SCHEDULE April 12 – 22, 2019
This listing includes meetings currently scheduled as of April 9, 2019.
For updates, please refer to: <https://beta.juneau.org/calendar>

Friday, April 12, 2019
12:00pm: Historic Resources Advisory Committee, Marine View Building 4th Floor Conference Room

Sunday, April 14, 2019
Bartlett Regional Hospital Board Members attending Governance Institute Leadership Conference April 14-17 in Scottsdale, AZ.

Monday, April 15, 2019
5:00pm: Sister Cities Committee Meeting, Downtown Library Small Conference Room

Tuesday, April 16, 2019
4:00pm: Aquatics Board Operations Committee, Dimond Park Aquatic Center Event Room A
5:30pm: Eaglecrest Board Human Resources Committee, Conference Room 224

Wednesday, April 17, 2019
5:00pm: Building Code Advisory Committee, Juneau Fire Station 820 Glacier Ave
5:00pm: Docks & Harbors OPS/Planning Committee, Port Field/US Customs Office 510 Franklin St
5:00pm: Youth Activities Board, Conference Room 224
5:30pm: Assembly Finance Committee, Assembly Chambers
5:30pm: Eaglecrest Trails Committee, City Hall Conference Room 237
6:00pm: Auke Bay Implementation Ad Hoc Committee meeting, UAS Rec Center Room 106

Thursday, April 18, 2019
10:00am: M/V Lumberman Salvage/Removal Interest & Information, Conference Room 224
12:30pm: ADA Committee, Downtown Library Large Meeting Room
5:15pm: Wetlands Review Board, Conference Room-224-CANCELLED
5:30pm: Sustainability in Juneau’s Visitor Industry hosted by Juneau Commission on Sustainability, Assembly Chambers
5:30pm: Douglas Advisory Board, Conference Room 224

Friday, April 19, 2019
12:15pm: Assembly Childcare Committee, Conference Room 224

Monday, April 22, 2019
7:00am: Hospital Board Planning Committee, BRH Admin Boardroom
6:00pm: Assembly Human Resources Committee, Assembly Chambers
7:00pm: Regular Assembly Meeting, Assembly Chambers

CBJ Boards/Committees Current or Upcoming Vacancies

The following is a list of vacancies on CBJ boards, commissions, committees and/or councils. Applications may be picked up outside the Clerk’s Office and are available on Juneau’s website at <https://beta.juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees>. Submit the applications to the Municipal Clerk’s Office, Room 202 of the Municipal Building (155 S. Seward Street, Juneau, AK 99801), or by fax at 586-4552, or via email at City.Clerk@juneau.org. For further information, call 586-5278.

Except as otherwise noted below, the seats are considered “Public Seats” open to anyone interested and willing to commit the time to serve, although there may be some membership criteria specified in a particular board’s governing legislation. **Applications may be submitted at any time and the Clerk’s Office holds all applications for a one year period; if an application due date is not specified one may be announced in the near future. All**

vacancies are considered Open Until Filled. The Assembly Human Resources Committee (HRC) makes appointment recommendations to the Assembly. The application process for the empowered boards (Airport, Aquatics, Eaglecrest, Docks & Harbors, and Bartlett Regional Hospital boards) plus the Planning Commission go through a more involved application/interview process than the other boards.

Boards/Commissions	Current & Upcoming Vacancies
Airport Board	3 seats for full terms beginning July 1
Animal Hearing Board	1 alternate seat for an unexpired term
Aquatics Board	7 public seats for various terms and 1 aquatics organization seat all beginning July 1
Board of Equalization	4 seats for various terms
Building Code Board of Appeals	4 seats for various terms
Docks & Harbors Board	3 seats for full terms beginning July 1
Eaglecrest Board	3 seats for full terms beginning July 1
Historic Resources Advisory Committee	3 seats for full terms beginning July 1
Juneau Commission on Aging	2 seats (<i>designated for public member over 65</i>) for various terms
Juneau Commission on Sustainability	3 seats for full terms beginning July 1
Juneau Human Rights Commission	1 seat for an unexpired term
Sales Tax Board of Appeals	3 seats for various terms
Sister Cities Committee	2 seats for various terms
Treadwell Arena Advisory Board	1 seat for a full term beginning June 1
utility Advisory Board	2 seats for full terms beginning June 1
Wetlands Review Board	1 seat for an unexpired term

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2019
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
7:00 pm Assembly Chambers

The following agenda items are scheduled:

Applicant: Jake & Bridget Lapenter
Case No.: USE2019 0007
Location: 319 W. 11th Street
Activity: A Conditional Use Permit for an accessory apartment on an undersized lot

Applicant: Edward Coffland
Case No.: USE2019 0008
Location: 5980 Thane Road
Activity: A Conditional Use Permit to allow a portion of an additional story on top of an existing below-grade structure

Other Business to be Conducted

- A presentation to the Commission regarding the Title 53 lease review process

To read materials associated with these agenda items please visit: <https://beta.juneau.org/assembly/assembly-minutes-and-agendas>

CUTS:

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This year’s dividend will be closely watched amid the broader budget debate, with Dunleavy calling for a full payout and lawmakers weighing smaller checks to afford government services. House Finance Committee Co-chair Neal Foster said the dividend will be dealt with later. House Minority members criticized the approach of dealing with the PFD later. Minority Leader Lance Pruitt, R-Anchorage, said in a press conference Thursday that the House should be talk-

ing about the PFD now instead of saving it for the end. Saving tough issues for the end of session, he said, creates an “artificial harmony” in the Legislature which could lead to people finding out later that they don’t have the alignment they thought they did. The 24-14 vote to approve the budget proposal broke down along caucus lines. Pruitt criticized the House Majority for not tackling the main topics head-on. “This budget had no plan,” Pruitt said. “Actually, what it seemed like is it seemed like a budget that was designed to keep a budget together (rather) than to actually govern.”

• Empire reporter Alex McCarthy contributed to this report.

Juneau School District Integrated Preschool Peer Applications

For the 2019-2020 School Year

Applications are for children 3-5 years old to be peer models for preschoolers with developmental delays.

Preschool classes available at
Gastineau Community School • Harborview Elementary
Riverbend Elementary • Glacier Valley Elementary
Mendenhall River Community School • Auke Bay Elementary
Tuesday – Friday, starting August 27, 2019

- Parents must provide transportation.
- Selected applicants will be invited to a required play session for final selection.

FOR APPLICATIONS:
Call **780-2072**

Visit us online at **juneauschools.org**
Or stop by the
Office of Student Services, room D212 –
Thunder Mountain High School, 3101 Riverside Drive.

Deadline for Peer Application is Friday, April 12, 2019.
Applications received after the deadline will be accepted and placed on a wait-list.



ADA Accommodations Available Upon Request: Please contact the Clerk’s office 72 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made to have a sign language interpreter present or an audiotope containing the Assembly’s agenda made available. The Clerk’s office telephone number is 586-5278, TDD 586-5351, e-mail: City.Clerk@juneau.org

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